



Dialogue for Peace in Uganda

Challenge

The pastoralist clans in the northeastern Ugandan region known as Karamoja have a history of conflict stemming from scarce natural resources and the high value of cattle. The various clans have had access to arms for several decades making their clashes deadly, and trade of goods and cattle risky. Insecurity in this region has increased because the Ugandan government has abandoned its disarmament program in Karamoja, hoping that the armed clan members might be helpful in protecting their communities from rebel groups in the north.



Photo: Sam Angolere

Junior-initiated elders listening to the Council of Senior Elders.

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Results

The most striking success of the project was the conclusion of a peace agreement between the Pian and the Bokora clans after several years of unrelenting conflict. An extended process of discreet discussions and personal contacts resulted in a declaration by the Pian elders that they would no longer carry out raiding activities against the Bokora. This was quickly followed by a reciprocal statement from the elders of the Bokora. Similar agreements were reached between other clans, allowing travel between clan territories for the purchase of cattle. By identifying and training seventy-three community mobilizers in Karamoja, an important grassroots network was created to help maintain peace. KISP estimates that between sixty to seventy raids have been prevented through the USAID program.

Initiative

USAID supported the Karamoja Initiative for Sustainable Peace (KISP) that emphasized developing personal contacts between influential elders within the different ethnic groups, and a permanent network of council elders and contact persons for useful, regular consultations within Karamoja.

This initiative identified and trained both women and young people as community mobilizers to encourage peace-building activities among their communities, and to gather information concerning raids and other aggressive activities. The aim was to encourage dialogue to prevent raids or to discuss the restitution of raided cattle. These individuals identify signs of potential raids and initiate dialogue to avert them. Radio programs, music galas, community meetings, mobilization campaigns, and traditional ceremonies were held to promote a culture of peaceful dispute resolution.

